

January 23, 2001
Human Services Appropriations
Subcommittee Meeting

Richard Woods also provided a video tape regarding fathers' rights. This video is available for viewing from the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Diagnosis and treatment of child access' denial

Clinical experience in 5,421 cases of child access' problems involving divorced, separated, and unmarried parents reveals four distinct patterns of behavior in the interactions among the child, each parent, and other participants, including step-parents and grandparents. Study of the symptoms of each **behavior** pattern, the distinctions among the four patterns, and the remedies which have proven successful in dealing with those behavior **patterns** enables better understanding of the interpersonal dynamic operating among the **parties**, and which, among the potential remedies for the child access problem² are most likely to resolve the child access problem.

According-to Policy Studies, Inc. of Denver Colorado, thirty-day follow up surveys, covering clients who received services, applying this diagnostic tool, under a federal demonstration grant over a period of two years indicated that 97.4 percent of service recipients indicated that these services were "somewhat helpful" or "very helpful" at resolving the child access problem.

This diagnostic tool is useful in describing the interpersonal dynamic of the key parties to the child access situation. This diagnostic tool is not designed to diagnose particular individual. Misapplication of this diagnostic tool for the latter purpose is ill advised and should be avoided.

Footnotes

1. Discussion of "access" isn't limited to "visitation". Visitation is a misnomer: divorce does not reduce parents to "visitors". Further, access should be seen as an obligation on both parents, not a right to be exercised or not exercised. One should lecture non-custodial parents who voluntarily fail to exercise access about the importance of access for the child's healthy academic, social, and moral development.
2. For example: mediation; use of a neutral party or day care center for exchange of the children; training in parenting, communications skills, or functioning as a step-family; counseling or support groups to help one of the parties cope with grieving, anger management, or relationship dependency; referral of one or more parties to the conflict for a psychological evaluation; or referral to litigation or other community resources.

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Historically, **the** remedy for access denial has been litigation, usually, contempt of court. However, the experience of thousands of divorced and unmarried parents demonstrates that contempt of court is expensive and, often, not successful at resolving the access problem. Even the former chief justice of the Iowa Court of Appeals, Leo Oxberger, stated "I would never put a mother in jail for denying visitation." This diagnostic tool demonstrates why, in most cases, the contempt of court remedy is counter-productive. At best, contempt of court is a litigious, expensive, and anxiety-producing means of educating the access-interfering parent. For the sake of the child and both parents we can and must avail ourselves to the opportunity for a more appropriate and measured response.

While this diagnostic tool favors a less contentious tool than contempt of court to resolve access problems, the existing court order is necessary to determine the custody and access environment in which the clients operate. A good access order should preserve the on-going nurturing relationship between the child and each separated parent, including:

- a. Sharing **legal** guardianship and decision making;
- b. Sharing the time and responsibilities of caring for and nurturing the child (see appendix 1);
- c. Attendance at and participation in the child's school activities and parent-teacher conferences;
- d. Attendance at and participation in the child's out-of-school activities, including clubs, lessons, and sports;
- e. Shared decision-making about the religious instruction of the child and shared involvement in that religious instruction;
- f. Authority to obtain emergency medical care for the child;
- g. In non-emergency situations, shared decision-making about the medical treatment of the child and joint attendance at those medical appointments;
- h. Regular telephone access between each parent and the child;
- i. Regular mail access between each parent and the child; and
- j. **Access** to school, medical, dental, and legal records **concerning** the child.

There have been cases in which, because the separation was very recent (e.g., the parents have been apart just a few weeks), patterns of behavior aren't well established. In such cases, the access counselor is likely to be asked to assist the parents in developing an access (visitation) schedule (see appendices 1 and 2) and to offer remedial assistance with adjustment difficulties. While the diagnosis of adjustment difficulty was appropriate and the treatment was at least partially effective, over time, other behaviors may emerge, requiring another diagnosis. Other clients are less adept in describing their relationship or lead the counselor on a merry chase with endless (but only minimally significant) complaints about the

other parent. Even so, in 5,421 cases, *there has been* no case which failed to fit the four diagnoses or which fit more than one of the four diagnoses at the same time.

The definition of the four patterns of behavior or diagnoses observed in child access denial are:

(1) **Adjustment difficulties** - The child's access to one parent is limited as the result of common post-conflict tension, hostility, situational depression, and uncertainty over the new role of custodial or non-custodial parent (or the role of the step-parent).

(2) **Knowledge/skills deficiency** - The child's access to one parent is limited due to a lack of knowledge on the part of one or both parents about his or her post-separation rights and obligations toward the child, the need of children for both parental access and financial child support, or the absence of skills necessary for parents to work together toward the best interest of their children.

(3) **Child-in-the-middle or black-robed child syndrome** - The child is placed in a loyalty conflict over which parent should have custody or whether or not access (visitation) will be exercised.

(4) **Power model syndrome** - Either or both parents attempt to control and manipulation the child's access to and emotional bond with the other parent.

Identification of symptoms

(1) **Adjustment difficulties**

a) The dissolution or paternity decree uses the term "reasonable visitation" or otherwise fails to provide a specific access order (time schedule and shared decisions), leading the client to complain of feelings of anger or powerlessness.

b) Client brings up, repeatedly, pre-divorce or separation grievances. (These tend to be relatively petty matters and/or matters which do not directly impact on-going child access.)

c) Client appears to be locked into a conflict role related to the divorce or separation.

d) Client appears tense, anxious, situationally depressed, or stuck in one stage of grieving related to child access issues:

Shock and panic

Disbelief and denial

Anger (retaliation)

Bargaining

Self-devaluation or situational depression

Acceptance of reality

Coping (dealing in a positive way with the new reality)

e) Client expresses uncertainty about the new role of physical care (custodial) or non-physical care parent.

f) Client expresses the feeling that his/her role as a parent has been devalued or feels disenfranchised as a parent.

g) One of the parties has remarried or has a new live-in relationship and the other parent has a fear of displacement by the new step-parent or the parent in said relationship is trying to create an artificial nuclear family.

h) The biological parents and/or a step-parent have a misconception or fear over the appropriate role of the step-parent.

When tension and hostility over divorce issues appear unabated two years after the finalization of the divorce and are not associated with the other parent's new relationship or on-going problems with a vague decree, by definition, the case is not an example of adjustment difficulties.

(2) **Knowledge/skills deficiency**

a) Parents are engaged in retaliatory withholding of financial support and scheduled access (visitation), insisting that denial of denial of visitation is justified by late financial child support payments or vice versa.

b) One parent did not have legal counsel in the divorce.

c) He/she lacks understanding of the post-separation rights and obligations of custodial and non-custodial parents.

d) The dissolution or paternity decree employed vague terms, leading the client to cite of disagreement over interpretation of those terms and a lack of ability to resolve his/her differences with the other parent. The client indicates *frustration* with the other parent, as contrasted with *anger* or *powerlessness*, which would indicate adjustment difficulty or power model syndrome.

e) One or both parents lack knowledge about the needs of children for both financial child support and nurturing by both parents. One or both parents failed to attend court-mandated classes on keeping the children out of the middle of divorce conflict.

f) One or both parents lack the skills necessary to work together toward the best interest of their children.

g) Out of a lack of knowledge (as opposed to a compulsive behavior), one parent has enrolled the children in school or extracurricular activities under the surname of a step-parent.

h) One or both parents insist on conducting all communications through a lawyer to resolve each and every problem.

i) One or both parents have a self-centered attitude or learned behaviors which make it difficult to put the child's need for access to the other parent ahead of his/her own agenda. Said behavior might be characterized as "childish". However, the parents are willing and able to learn and implement better interpersonal and communications skills.

(3) Child-in-the-middle or black-robed child syndrome

a) One or both parents attempt to win the affections of the child through excessive permissiveness and increasingly elaborate gifts, treats, and entertainment (such as the Disneyland Dad or Disneyland Mom syndrome among non-custodial parents). Though apparently benign, this is a thinly disguised, tug-of-war for the affections of the child. As a consequence, the child experiences a loyalty conflict.

b) The children exhibit the symptoms of stress arising from the loyalty conflict. Stress symptoms observed may include sleep disorders, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, stress headaches, depression, loss of appetite, heart burn, anorexia, deteriorating obedience, deteriorating school performance, materialism, acting out, aggression, extraordinary defensiveness, running away from home, thoughts of suicide, and suicide gestures. These symptoms may have been misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder.

c) One or both parents ask the child if the child wishes to exercise access (scheduled time) with the non-custodial parent. For example, a non-custodial parent may ask if the child wants to exercise the time scheduled by the court order. On the other hand, a custodial parent may give the child an appealing alternative to the court-ordered access (scheduled time), such as shopping "for that new Nintendo you've been wanting." [These are, in part, examples of the negative consequences of using the misnomer "visitation rights". Instead, access should be viewed as an court-ordered expectation on all parties.]

d) Parents may have convinced themselves that such choices are modern "non-directive" parenting. They are not. Such choices are an invitation to the child to make the choice to hurt or disappoint the other parent. The child is not being given a choice. Rather, the child is being placed in the middle of a loyalty conflict between the parents. This is analogous to the mule starving to death while standing equal distance between two piles of corn.

e) A non-custodial parent wants to base a modification of custody on the sudden, unexplained preference of the child to live with the non-custodial parent.

f) A non-custodial parent asks if the child can decide to come and live with him or her, automatically, at a certain age.

g) The children are attempting to manipulate their parents to their material advantage. For example, the child may have stated, "I haven't decided whether or not I can come this weekend, but if we could go shopping for that new Nintendo game . . ." More extreme or persistent materialism would indicate power model syndrome.

h) One or both parents complain that the child is out of control or report persistent misbehavior, where the source of this misbehavior is a loyalty conflict or manipulation by the child of one parent against the other (i.e., "If you don't let me . . .(I).

(4) Power model syndrome

It must be restated that each of these diagnoses relate to a family dynamic: the pattern of interactions among the child and each parent. In particular, "power model syndrome" is not a diagnosis of an individual family member, but a **pattern** of interaction among the parties. One remedy for a case diagnosed as "power model syndrome", having the virtue of dealing with the entire pattern of behavior among the parties instead of individual infractions, might be to refer the parties for a psychological evaluation. Such an evaluation might indicate a serious psychopathology in one or more parties or that parties who are, individually, within the normal range by most measures. However, in the interpersonal dynamic related to access to the child of the parties, the parties are locked in a pattern of efforts to control and manipulate the child's access to the other parent and the affections of the child.

a) In all cases, "control" is a primary issue related to access to the child. The mechanism for control and manipulation need not be overt or obviously domineering. Instead, the mechanism might be passive-aggressive or relatively subtle psychological manipulation of the child.

b) One or both parents tend to be obsessed with placing fault and blame. The other parent may be blamed for a nearly endless list of problems.

c) One or both parents tend to be chronically critical or to withhold approval. Nothing is good enough. No achievement is worthy of praise. The child may strive desperately for the approval of said parent or, at the opposite extreme, exhibit symptoms of depression.

d) One or both parents express exceptional bitterness toward the other parent, persisting beyond two years.

e) One or both parents want to punish the other parent for past personal affronts or injustices, often through litigation. This behavior may be justified in the eyes of said parent, in part, by the objective of moral vindication through litigation or a demonstration of control over the children.

f) The case involves recurrent, highly adversarial types of litigation (custody battles and contempt of court). The recurring threat of litigation (e.g., "If you don't then I'll take you back to court to raise your child support.") is used to control the children or gain concessions from the other parent.

g) In at least one parent's family of origin, there was an alcoholic parent and a co-dependent parent or one parent in the family of origin was extremely domineering. This is likely to be accompanied by alcoholism, diagnosable mental illness, or inability to form lasting relationships among the siblings of the parent from that family. The pattern is likely to be multi-generational. There

is a moderate probability of finding comparable patterns in the family of origin of the other parent. Such a pattern is not unlike adult child of alcoholic syndrome, in which one sibling adopts a pattern of behavior comparable to the alcoholic parent while the other adopts behavior comparable to that of the co-dependent parent.

h) In almost all power model cases, there was a pattern of control-oriented behavior on the part of one or both parents before the divorce or separation. For example, before the separation, one parent might state that he/she and children "walked on egg shells" **around the** other parent, in order to avoid eruptions of the latter's volcanic temper. These eruptions of rage are unpredictable and designed to get other members of the household to bend over backwards to avoid the occurrence of rage. It may be reported that the other parent is able to rationalize violence on such grounds as "He made me do it," "She deserved it," or "I had to do it get his attention." All such actions are rationalized as the "fault" of the victim. If this violence is part of an on-going, escalating cycle of belittling, degrading, insulting, humiliating, fits of rage, control, physical intimidation, blocking egress, shoving, poking, and, finally, hitting, then this should be recognized as a likely case of "battering". Projection of this behavior onto the other parent by the actual perpetrator is not impossible.

i) Often, one or both parents have very few friends. One parent might state that the other parent forced him/her to break off all established friendships.

j) One parent *defines* friendship as "loyalty", particularly in sharing a dislike of people who are perceived to have wronged said parent. This pattern should be visible in said parent's family and former work relationships. Coinciding with this pattern is the tendency to turn on, despise, and "shun" a former friend, when that friendship ends. When this behavior pattern is later applied to access denial, that same parent will consider the other parent or the new spouse of the other parent to be an enemy; generalize as "enemies" the other parent's friends, parents, and extended family; and demand that friends and household members join in ostracism or shunning of enemies. Such parent may appear to have a "gift" for obtaining compliance in such "shunning".

k) The children are interrogated immediately after the children return from time with the other parent. Said interrogation includes pressure to provide personal information about other parent, the other parent's family members, or the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

l) The parents are in personal communication with each other far more than necessary for the exchange of basic information about the children and the schedule for future access. Such contacts are usually negative in content, complaining, and, in some cases, rising to the level of harassment. Calls may come at inappropriate times at home or work, as if designed to have the maximum disruptive

impact. These parents lack rational post-divorce interpersonal boundaries, but not merely as an interpersonal skill. This might give the impression that one parent has an obsessive interest in the other parent. However, if this is truly a power model dynamic, then that impression is misleading: clinical experience has demonstrated that some parents divorce not for the obvious purpose of living separately, but for the purpose of controlling the other parent.

m) One parent calls to speak with the children several times per day and refuse to schedule such calls with the children. Such a parent refuses to accept rational limitations on calls with the children. A variation is that children may be expected to call said parent frequently during the child's time with the other parent'. The not-too-subtle message conveyed to the child by such behavior is that the other parent is considered incapable of caring for the child.

n) An alternate pattern of behavior associated with this diagnosis is one parent going to great extremes to control the other parent's access to the children by telephone. This would include corporal punishment for the offense of calling the other parent. A classic manifestation of power model behavior was cited by the Iowa Court of Appeals in **"In Re Marriage of Downing"** (432 NW2nd 692),

"On numerous occasions, Christine intercepted mail sent to the children by Michael and did not allow them to keep gifts from their father. . . . and went as far as removing the telephone from the house when she left the children alone so that they could not call their father or grandparents. She did this with knowledge that [there might be] emergency situations where access to a phone would have been essential."

o) One or both parents eavesdrop on or record (illegally) child's telephone conversations with the other parent. Similarly, a parent might remain in the same room during the call and carry on a running commentary, telling the child to convey messages to the other parent, or telling the child what to say.

p) One or both parents open and read mail sent to the children by the other parent or withhold mail sent by the other parent. In some cases, mail addressed to the children is returned unopened and marked "refused" or "return to sender" by one parent.

q) One or both parents will attempt to persuade the children to call a subsequent spouse by the name **"dad"** or **"mom"** and to use the surname of that subsequent spouse. Such parents persist in enrolling the child in school and extracurricular activities under the surname of the subsequent spouse even after being informed that such actions are inconsistent with the child's legal name, place the child in a loyalty conflict, and confuse a young child's sense of identity.

r) One or both parents make uninvited contact with the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Initially, the

hidden the agenda for such contact might be to alert and warn the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend of all kinds of terrible things about the other parent. A related tactic is to gain the agreement of the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend on some issue between the parties. If unsuccessful in disrupting the other parent's relationship, such a parent tends to turn on the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, telling others, including the children, all kinds of terrible things about the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Such efforts have included harassment of the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, such as trying to get him/her fired from his/her job.

s) One parent insists that the other parent's new spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend be nowhere near the children when they are in the care of the other parent. Such parents have filed for court orders to prevent the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend from being in the presence of the children. Courts, misguidedly buying into such efforts, have issued restraining orders to prevent a spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend from having contact with the children, although there is no evidence of wrong-doing on the part of that third party. A variation on this symptom is that some parents have flown into a rage if the child refers to the other parent's spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend as "mom" or "dad".

t) one or both parents make inappropriate comments to the children about the other parent's new spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, often in crude and obscene terminology.

u) One or both parents make inappropriately revealing remarks about the adult relationship between the parents during the marriage and the divorce.

v) One parent punishes the children by saying, "If you continue to misbehave like this, you'll grow up to be just like your father/mother." This creates an association in which "bad" behavior is associated with the other parent. (A variation on this symptom is discrimination against the sibling who most identifies with or bears the strongest physical resemblance to the other parent.)

w) The child is encouraged by one or both parents to "keep secrets" from the other parent or is told not to tell the other parent about a certain matter. Again, this isn't an isolated incident, but a continuing pattern of behavior and carried to the level of a contest for the loyalty of the child. Many such children become noticeably anxious and hesitant if asked a casual question about something related to his or her life while in the care of said parent.

x) One or both parents *belittle* the other parent's employment, work habits, tastes, clothing, cleanliness, home, and vehicle. Such remarks aren't isolated, but continuous and systematic. The child's assent to the statement, as a judgment against the other parent, is expected.

y) One parent punishes the children if they do not give

verbal assent to that parent's negative and belittling assessment of the other parent or material rewards the child's compliance with that assessment. Punishments tend to be excessive and disproportionate to the offense, such as corporal punishment for mentioning the other parent's name, saying something positive about the other parent, or failing to agree with negative remarks about the other parent. When material rewards are used, this tends to create an environment of materialism, in which the child's every whim must be satisfied **almost** immediately.

z) One parent compromises discipline in order to buy the child's loyalty. Compromising on discipline is often carried to the extreme of failing to set even the most obvious common sense limits for a child's behavior; allowing young children to set their own bedtime; and allowing and enabling early adolescent children to **stay** out as late as they like, **become involved in sexual relationships**, and otherwise exercise total autonomy over their lives.

aa) The parent with custody or physical care will relocate the children far from the non-custodial parent *without a compelling career or family reason for doing so*. Many **such relocations** will be to a distant part of the United States, creating a physical obstruction to continued access. In many such cases, the custodial or physical care parent fails to provide the non-custodial parent with the new address (violation of 710.6 of the Code of Iowa). Such parents may move frequently without leaving a forwarding address.

bb) Carrying "**j**" (enemies list and shunning) and "**w**" (keeping secrets from the other parent) to their logical conclusion, one parent persuades the children to *conspire* against the other parent and/or the other parent's new spouse. Such conspiracies often begin as small tests of loyalty and increase to more complex and hurtful manifestations.

cc) The most extreme cases of the power model of behavior have been identified as the "parental alienation syndrome" (Richard Gardner, Parental Alienation Syndrome). In these cases, one parent will go to great lengths to persuade the child to join in hating and resisting all contact with the other parent. These extreme cases of power model behavior may be manifested in persuading the child to make false allegations of child sexual abuse against the other parent. (If the client claims to have been falsely accused of abuse, but no other power model factors are present, then the claim of a false allegation is not supported by this assessment.)

dd) Particularly where power model syndrome was accompanied by battering syndrome (see "**h**") during the marriage, one or both parents may threaten or carry out violence or property crimes against the other parent. One parent may persuade third parties, possibly including the children, to threaten or carry out such violent acts.

Additional symptoms observed in *some* power model relationships:

a) One parent overuses medical care, even to the point of

"hypochondria by proxy". This may arise from the parent's own need for attention from medical personnel or the motive of impoverishing a parent who is required to pay medical deductibles and coinsurance.

b) Some parents raise questions and plant doubts about the other parent's paternity of the child.

c) In some power model relationships, one party engaged in such deceptions such as "You can't get pregnant because I've had a vasectomy" or "It isn't possible for me to get pregnant."

d) Some parents go to extremes in scheduling activities and appointments during the other parent's time with the children to the point that the other parent has little or no time for activities which weren't planned and scheduled by the other parent.

e) Either custodial or non-custodial parents frequently find excuses to change the court-ordered schedule for access or the locations where the children are to be picked up or dropped off.

f) Some parents demand to have a detailed plan for every moment of the other parent's time with the children.

g) Some parents demand a formal request (written or by telephone) before the other parent and the children may exercise a court-ordered visit. The demand continues even though child access is exercised punctually and consistently.

h) In some cases, there was preemptive child snatching at the time of the separation.

i) In some cases, one parent goes to great lengths to cause problems for the other parent at his or her place of employment, to the point of getting that parent fired - even though that might result in the loss of income to the household of the parent making the allegations.

Discerning degrees and distinctions among reported symptoms

Extensive work has been done on documentation of symptoms, identification of degrees and distinctions among these these symptoms, formulation and support of the diagnosis.

a. Adjustment difficulty cases. The case must be within two years of the time the divorce was final or subject to a relatively recent marriage or change in the living relationship of one of the parties. Adjustment difficulties tend to diminish over time with minimal intervention. (Of course, even temporary access problems are harmful to the children and should be addressed.) Vague decrees are particularly likely to produce problems over holiday access. (Not coincidentally, two years is the full cycle for alternating holiday access, which provides time to resolve conflicting expectations.)

In adjustment difficulty cases, parents respond positively to:

1) counseling on separating post-separation anger and tension from the value to the children of seeing the other parent;

- 2) examination and clarification of custodial and non-custodial parent roles; and
- 3) referrals to support groups.

Access problems which last beyond two years or which do not respond to said treatment are not adjustment difficulty cases.

b. Knowledge/skills deficiency cases The court order is likely to be relatively recent. However, some knowledge/skills deficiency cases drag on for a surprising number of years. Ordinarily, the client will express an example of misinformation in the course of the interview. It may be useful to ask the client about his or her understanding of basic rights and responsibilities of custodial and non-custodial parents and the particular provisions of his or her divorce decree. (For this reason, we always ask clients to bring a copy of their divorce or paternity decrees to the appointment.) Retaliatory withholding of financial child support or access is characteristic of such cases, but retaliation is the symptom and not the cause of the underlying problem.

Knowledge deficiency problems will respond to basic information provided verbally and in writing during the course of the appointment, goal-setting with the client, informative letters to the other parent, and/or referrals to specialized classes in communication skills, parenting skills, and anger management skills.

Feigning ignorance is a common tactic for evading responsibility for one's willful behavior and concealed agenda. If a case diagnosed as a **knowledge/skills** deficiency case does not respond to said treatment, then it is likely that the appearance of knowledge/skills deficiency was deceptive.

c. Black-robed child cases The access counselor has a duty not only to listen and take notes on the case history as described by the client, but to inquire about the health, behavior, attitudes, and academic performance of the children *and* the relationship between the client and the children. In black-robed child cases, the client will describe symptoms of stress in the children: stress headaches; sleep disorders; clinging and misbehavior at the beginning and/or end of access; evasion of responsibilities and decision-making; inattentiveness; resistance to authority; deteriorating grades; diagnosis of certain learning disabilities, including Attention Deficit Disorder; running away from home; chest or stomach pain; heart burn; weight loss; and/or suicide gestures.

Not every symptom of stress in children indicates black-robed child syndrome. Longing for the absent parent, separation anxiety, fantasizing about the other parent, a decree of insecurity,

nightmares, and other manifestations of missing or mourning for the nuclear family and the absent parent appear to be nearly universal in children from broken homes. Different children, or the same child at different ages, will respond differently, to the ordinary, though regrettable, stress and grieving associated with family break-up.

The distinction between such universal grieving and the more severe symptoms of black-robed child syndrome must be drawn carefully. Not only will the stress symptoms of black-robed child syndrome be more severe, **but there will be collateral indicators in the behavior of the parents.** Such symptoms in the children are signals to ask questions of the parents about black-robed-child types of behaviors. In response to thorough questioning, clients will express attitudes which betray the black-robed child syndrome or describe such attitudes and behavior on the part of the other parent.

d. Power model cases The symptoms of power model behavior are thoroughly identified. Of course, not all symptoms will be present in every case, but most will. One must guard against being too hasty to diagnose power model behavior. Cases which appear to be power model cases early in the interview will turn out to be adjustment difficulty or knowledge/skills deficiency cases. Guard against leading the client too much during the interview. Let the client tell the story with a minimum of questioning. Thorough documentation of symptoms is particularly important in power model cases.

Even with these safeguards, a misdiagnosis of power model syndrome is still the most common mistake made by the access counselor. Even the most perfect person who ever lived showed righteous anger in dealing with money changers and pharisees. Even under the best of circumstances, the anger of ordinary mortals is neither righteous nor displayed with good judgment.

Parents going through battles over child access are fearful and angry. Such parents see the angry and fearful behavior of the other parent through a distorted lens. An important clue to this misdirection is that the client describes the other parent as the problem. In a true power model case, there must be a parent who, by his or her chronic lack of assertiveness, self-esteem deficit, and/or passive-aggressive behavior, has enabled the other parent to be a more assertive and overt manipulator.

The access counselor helps no one by attempting to diagnose the party who is not present. The access counselor diagnoses a family dynamic, a pattern of interaction among both parents and the children. In power model family dynamic, there must be a chronic manipulator and, equally, a chronic co-dependent.

Remedies for access denial

a. Effective non-litigation remedies

Documentation - Teach the client to keep a journal, calendar, a telephone log, photocopies of correspondence, and, when appropriate, tape recordings.

Counseling - The appropriate treatment of situational depression is cognitive therapy and empowerment. We are teaching an attitude, a different way of perceiving the other parent, and a set of skills.

Education - The counselor's role is educational. We educate the client about the child's need for a continuing relationship with both parents; the importance of redirecting their attention to the clients's relationship with the child rather than anger toward the other parent; and various skills.

Communication skills - Active or reflective listening, letter-writing skills, and setting boundaries for conversations contribute to more constructive communications.

Parenting skills - Many non-custodial parents are anxious about exercising discipline. Some lack necessary parenting skills.

Anger management - Referral to anger/stress management counseling and classes.

Counselor intervention through a letter to other parent to educate the other parent about 1) the importance to the child of preserving relationships or 2) legal rights and obligations.

Mediation - for developing access plans.

Neutral drop-off - day care centers used to exchange the children, keeping the parents from having contact and providing objective documentation that the children were or were not dropped off as ordered by the court (see Neutral Drop-off, page 18).

Parenting after divorce classes - a recent development, such curriculums as Kids in the Middle are useful in explaining who to minimize the harm to the children resulting from the disruption of the family home.

Referral to other services (support groups, supervised visitation) and community services such as specialized counseling, classes, and/or treatment programs. Severe cases of black-robed child syndrome and power model syndrome indicate the need for a medical and/or psychiatric evaluation and treatment of the children.

b. Less adversarial litigation options

Some forms of litigation are highly adversarial, putting the respondent in fear of a jail term for contempt of court or losing custody. For the first three diagnoses of child access interference, contempt or a petition for modification of custody would not be recommended as a first option.

For example, if the problem is adjustment difficulty arising from lingering anxiety over the recent litigation, adding more litigation is going to reinforce, rather than alleviate, the problem. Contempt or a petition for modification might serve the purpose of educating a parent about his or her responsibilities related to child access, but that is a terribly expensive and inefficient means of achieving said education.

Where one parent refuses to comply with anything short of a court order, please consider less adversarial litigation options, such as: a motion for declaratory ruling to clarify an access (visitation) order; a motion for an order to participate in mediation; a petition for modification for make-up time; or an application for the alternatives to contempt, such as make-up time [598.23 (2) b of the Code of Iowa].

Specific remedy for the power model syndrome

At least initially, it is preferable to disengage the parties from litigation and seek voluntary participation in a psychological evaluation and treatment. Such parents thrive on the adversarial system of justice. High adversarial litigation, such as contempt or custody modifications put such parents in the role of martyr (e.g., the Morgan-Foertich case) and have built-in legal advantages for the power model parent, such as high evidentiary standards and the burden to prove the "intent" of such a parent or a substantial and permanent change in circumstances. Thus, high adversarial litigation tends to be counterproductive in power model cases.

Even if a less manipulative parent "wins" a round in court, in our system of justice, the more manipulative parent can always resort to an appeal or a new form of litigation (ultimately, child or domestic abuse allegations).

Instead of high adversarial forms of litigation, seek voluntary participation in neutral drop-off programs for exchange of the children through a day care center (see Neutral Drop-off, page 18); radical changes in communication skills and modes of communication; intensive counseling about the need of the children for both parents and the damage caused by loyalty conflicts; participation of the passive parent in assertiveness training and support groups (see page 18); and ongoing monitoring by the access counselor.

If such interventions are not sufficient to change the dynamic, the access counselor should seek voluntary participation in professional psychological evaluation and treatment. If such voluntary participation in evaluation and treatment can not be elicited, then it may be necessary to seek a court order for an

evaluation by a psychologist or psychiatrist qualified to **diagnose** manipulative and **controlling** behavior. The counselor's documentation of the initial interview and subsequent interventions is likely to be very useful in obtaining the court order for a psychological evaluation. (We recommend against providing this list of symptoms.)

Once manipulative and controlling behavior has been diagnosed by an objective psychological evaluation, then a treatment plan should be designed for both parents and the children. The less overtly assertive parent will need treatment for low self-esteem and/or co-dependent behavior. (See "Relationship dependency recovery/support groups", page 18.) In extreme cases, the children will require virtual "deprogramming."

Any litigation from that point forward should be coordinated with the treatment program and progress therein. It is important that any further litigation pursued be designed for specific purposes related to treatment:

- a) A restraining order against specific behaviors of the parents, documented by the treatment counselors, which would be a barrier to successful treatment of the children;
- b) A court order for use of a neutral drop-off/pick-up center for exchange of the children (see Neutral Drop-off, page 18).
- c) A motion to clarify or a motion for a declaratory ruling to clarify certain specific access issues, thereby reducing the potential for disagreement and conflict, relating to scheduled access times, telephone access, right to attend parent-teacher conferences, and related matters.
- d) A writ of habeas corpus to compel access to the child.

Low adversarial litigation has a moderate burden of proof (for example, for a clarification, merely showing that the parents do not agree on the definition of "reasonable"), so such cases are winnable. If manipulative parents learn that they can not win a certain type of litigation, they are likely to avoid that type of litigation.

(For further remedies, also see "Physical abuse and **battering**", page 17.)

Physical abuse and battering

If the counselor deals with enough power model cases, the counselor will encounter female *and* male victims of physical abuse and battering. The term "physical abuse" applies to one or more incidents in which a victim who is not in a position to escape or defend himself/herself is hit, kicked, scratched, bitten, or otherwise physically assaulted. The term "battering" applies to systematic degradation of a victim to the point that he/she believes that multiple incidents of physical abuse by the abuser are justified and deserved.

Battering victims tend to be reticent to discuss their situation out of trepidation over the consequences of raising the issue. Male victims of physical abuse and battering are particularly inclined to minimize the injuries and potential consequences of future incidents. A male victim of battering might say, "I deserved it," "It's my fault," or "**She** beats on me, but only when I make her angry."

Male and female victims must be encouraged to discuss and help the counselor to document the incidents. They must be encouraged to understand that no one deserves battering and no one is responsible for the violent outbursts of another person. They need to understand that the battering will not stop, diminish, or remain at the same level. Without intervention by the court and battering experts, typically, a temporary separation and a court order for the perpetrator to attend domestic violence classes, the violence will grow worse.

The victim, as well as the perpetrator, needs to change self-deprecating attitudes, expectations, and behavior. Assume that the victim's behavior will not change without outside intervention, even if the victim claims to understand and agree with the **statements** in the **preceeding** paragraph. The counselor must get the victim into a support group where he/she will receive the help and on-going reinforcement he/she needs. Fathers for Equal Rights, Inc. refers victims to two relationship dependency recovery groups and strongly encourages participation in these groups.

Further, the counselor should advise victim to, immediately, remove himself/herself and the children from immediate danger through a Restraining Order (in conjunction with a Petition for Dissolution or Petition for Separate Maintenance), Protective Order (in conjunction with a Petition for Relief from Domestic Abuse), ~~or~~ a No Contact Order (in conjunction with a criminal charge of **domestic** abuse), all of which would remove the batterer from the home, or by the victim and children moving out of the home.

For further protection of the victim and the children, if the court determines that the children are in no danger from access to the perpetrator, neutral drop-off/pick-up for exchange of the children for court-ordered visitation should be arranged through a day care center or a third party.

Neutral drop-off

Fathers for Equal Rights, Inc. asks each parent using neutral drop-off/pick-up to sign a detailed contract covering conduct and obligations related to neutral drop-off/pick-up. Among other things, the neutral drop-off/pick-up contract provides for a fifteen to twenty minute intervening time between the time the children are dropped off by one parent and the time the other parent is to arrive, a directive that the other parent should be at least three blocks away from the center when the children are being dropped off, requiring that the parents conduct themselves appropriately while at the center, and procedures to follow if the child is ill, if one parent fails to show up, or if there is an unavoidable change in the visitation schedule.

Fathers for Equal Rights, Inc. also provides log sheets which should be signed by each parent with the date and time the children are dropped off and when they are picked up. These log sheets provide a legal record, similar to making financial child support payments through the Clerk of Court, which can be used by parents to prove that the children were or were not dropped off as ordered by the court.

Since a custodial parent who is denying access, a non-custodial parent who falsely claims to be **unable to** pick-up the children, or a physically abusive spouse is unlikely to willingly participate in neutral drop-off, it may be necessary to obtain a court order.

Relationship dependency recovery/support groups

It may take some research, but, in all probability, there are relationship dependency recovery groups (sometimes called self-esteem support groups) with the very specific purpose of helping victims of physical and emotional abuse, battering, or power model behavior recover from behavior patterns which permitted the abuse and allowed it to continue. Before referring access counseling clients to such **groups**, be familiar with the curriculum of the groups **and** be certain that it provides the needed emotional support and retraining.

In the Des Moines area, Fathers for Equal Rights refers to:
Dr. John V. Harkrader, Professional Consulting, 515-223-1987

Appendix 1

Schedules for sharing the time and responsibilities of caring for and nurturing the child should be designed - as nearly as possible - to preserve the child's relationship with each parent. A time chart, graphing the days of the week and hours of the day, can demonstrate the percentage of time and responsibilities each parent assumed toward the child. A relationship questionnaire (see appendix 2) is also useful in quantifying relationships.

Joint physical care **should** be given all due consideration as warranted by the interest of preserving the child's relationship with each parent. Several widely reported studies of children not in age-appropriate joint physical care situations, as well as studies which have singled out families with a history of domestic violence, reported negative outcomes in joint physical care situations. Such reports may be valid, but their lessons should be applied appropriately. Studies of children in joint physical care which have not singled out age-inappropriate and domestic violence situations repeatedly demonstrate that children appear to have adjusted extremely well to joint physical care.

When a less equal sharing of time is appropriate, we recommend:

- a) every other weekend from 6:00 p.m. Friday through 8:00 p.m. Sunday;
- b) one week night per week from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.;
- c) four full weeks in the summer;
- d) **Fathers'/Mothers'** Day and [date] (**father's/mother's** birthday) each year;
- e) in odd numbered years Memorial Day, Labor Day, 10 a.m. on December 24 (Christmas Eve Day) until 10:00 a.m. on December 25; and **10:00** a.m. on December 31 (New Years Eve Day) until 10:00 a.m. on January 1;
- f) in even numbered years Easter, Fourth of July until 10:00 a.m. on July 5, Thanksgiving Day, and 10:00 a.m. on December 25 (Christmas Day) until 10:00 a.m. on December 26;
- g) your child's birthday in even or odd years;
- h) the scheduled holidays in d, e, f, and g take precedence over scheduled weekends;
- i) the parents shall share the right to take your child to school and extra-curricular activities and to attend parent-teacher conferences;
- j) if one of the preceding scheduled visits is missed due to your child's illness, extra-curricular activities, or schedule conflict, then the parents shall schedule a make-up visit;
- k) babysitter of choice for your child before third party child care; and
- l) scheduled weekly telephone contact with your child.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILD

Use this opportunity to discuss your relationship with your child. Answer questions, but don't be overly technical. Discuss emotions and the feelings between you and your child. Don't be "macho".

Did you plan on children before marriage?
Did you discuss having children or not having an abortion?
Did you make career decisions based on interests of your family?
Did you attend obstetrical appointments during the pregnancy?
Did you attend child birth classes?
Were you in the delivery room for the child birth?
Did you take time off from work after the baby was born?
Did you share responsibilities when the baby came home from the hospital? Did you help to care for the baby by getting up nights, changing diapers, feeding, giving baths?
Did you share in the medical care of the baby? Did you administer medication? Did you take the baby to doctor's appointments?
Were you involved in arrangements for baptism?
Did your family demonstrate interest in the baby?
Did your family provide child care while you and your spouse worked?
How old was the baby when you and the other parent returned to work?
Was the other parent away from home leaving the child in your care?
Was the other parent ill (more than the common cold or flu) leaving the child in your care for an extended time?
Were you involved in the selection of day care arrangements?
Did the babysitter call you if there were problems during the day?
Did you take time off from work if the child was ill?
Did you take time off from work to babysit?
What educational activities did you do with the child?
(e.g., teaching child pre-verbal skills, to talk, to sing; recognize numbers, letters, shapes, or colors; pre-reading skills, reading, spelling, and writing; to walk, to catch, or other physical skills)
Did you read to or tell the child stories?
Did you read stories with morals?
What were your daily routines with the child?-bedtime?-weekly?-meals?
What things was the child particularly fond of doing with you?
Were there differences in the things you did with the child (e.g. you did things with them; the other parent parked them in front of TV)?
Did you take your child to medical or dental appointments?
Were you involved in medical decisions?
Did you take the child to church or Sunday school?
Did you provide other moral instruction?
Were you involved in the decisions about your child's education?
Did you attend parent-teacher conferences? school programs? open house? Do you take an active interest in the child's school work?
What indoor and outdoor activities have you taught the child?
Have you been involved in the child's out-of-school activities?
Have you been involved in lessons for the child? (dance, music, etc.)
Has the child visited with your family regularly? maintained contact?
Have you taken parenting skills classes?
What are your views on child-rearing?
Who handled discipline? What kind of discipline do you use?
How have you helped your child to solve his or her problems?
Who are your role models for parenting your children?
Did you have the child in your care during a previous separation?
Have you supported the child's relationship with the other parent?
Are you or the other parent dating? Is the child exposed to this?

Over eight million children in America lost access to one parent after divorce or separation. These access problems arise most often because of anger over the divorce, unfamiliar parenting roles, or lack of communication skills. To address those problems, Fathers For Equal Rights has developed a number of specialized services to help both parents maintain their relationship with their children.

Access Counseling

Access Counseling advises parents how to obtain and enforce:

- joint legal custody
- visitation rights
- access to children via telephone or mail
- the right to participate in the child's parent-teacher conferences, school and extra-curricular activities

Access Counseling helps a parent by reviewing the case history and the parent's past relationship with the child. In that process, a parent is shown how focusing on positive aspects of the relationship with his or her child is more productive than dwelling exclusively on the problems with the other parent.

Access counselors are trained to diagnose four types of access difficulties: adjustment; misinformation; black-robed child syndrome; and power model behavior. For each specific diagnosis, the access counselor recommends remedies which have been proven effective in hundreds of similar cases.

Access Remedies

Effective access remedies include communications skills training, counseling on anger management, parenting skills classes, educating the parent about his/her rights under existing laws, support groups, journaling, mediation, a reading list and referrals to specialized services within the community. The parent is provided with specific written recommendations tailored to the individual access problems.

Oftentimes, parents are under the false impression that the only solution to denial of visitation (and other child access problems) is hiring an attorney to file contempt of court against the custodial parent. However, there are a significant number of potential remedies. Contempt of court is often the least effective and many times, the most counter-productive of potential remedies.

When litigation is Unavoidable

When litigation appears to be necessary, the access counselor recommends "low adversarial" legal actions. The counselor refers the parent to attorneys who specialize in such procedures. Low adversarial legal actions tend to be more effective than contempt of court. They are less likely to increase animosity and they are normally less expensive.

Access Counseling Appointments

Access Counseling is handled by one of our trained counselors. In most cases, issues and questions can be addressed in one session.

All appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5 PM. Parents should allow 90 minutes to 2 hours for the appointment. A fee of \$40.00 per hour is expected at the time of the appointment. Parents should bring copies of relevant legal papers.

To schedule an appointment, please call the Father For Equal Rights office at 515/277-8789.

Support Groups And Educational Meetings

Support groups provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss their situations with others who share like experiences. Call our office for details.

Educational meetings feature speakers who can help educate parents about their rights and responsibilities towards their children. Such meetings are held in different communities throughout Iowa. For details on the next and nearest meeting, contact our office: (515) 277-8789

Neutral Drop-Off Center

Fathers For Equal Rights operates a neutral drop-off /pick-up center. This allows a parent to exchange his/her children without having contact with the other parent. Use of neutral drop-off is recommended in those cases in which a great deal of tension is associated with exchanging the children for visitation. Such tensions include remarks about the other parent or threats in front of the children.

The neutral drop-off center is supervised and is located in a day care center. Service is available on Friday evenings from 6:00 PM through 9:00 PM, and on Sundays from 5:30 PM through 9:00 PM. Neutral drop-off services are available at other times by appointment.

To make arrangements for neutral drop-off, call our office for an appointment with one of our access counselors.

Weekend Activities Programs

A federal grant received by Fathers For Equal Rights, Inc. provides for a special, weekend activities program for separated/divorced parents and their children. Activities are available for all age groups and are regularly listed in the Fathers For Equal Rights newsletter. Please call our office for more details.

Publications

Fathers For Equal Rights publishes an informative, monthly newsletter. To subscribe, make out and send your check to:

Treasurer, Fathers For Equal Rights
8509 Prairie
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

You can obtain a free, two-month trial subscription by calling our office.

The Director-v of Fathers' Right Organizations is a list of 280 active organizations and agencies in the U.S. providing information, access counseling, support groups, education, advocacy for separated/divorced parents and lawyer referral. To order the Directory, mail a check for \$10.00 to:

Fathers For Equal Rights
3623 Douglas Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT [441]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to the authority of 2000 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2435, section 4, subsection 4d(3)(b), the Department of Human Services proposes to adopt Chapter 100, "Child Support Parental Obligation Pilot Projects," to the Iowa Administrative Code.

The Seventy-eighth General Assembly has indicated its intent to develop programs to encourage the participation of both parents in the lives of their children. The legislature has directed the Department to develop community-level parental obligation pilot projects to help parents remove the barriers they encounter in supporting their children emotionally and financially. These projects will assist parents who are living apart in meeting their parental obligations and in supporting their children. The Department may also include families at risk of separation in project services.

Pilot projects are to maximize the use of existing community resources through partnering with other state agencies and community-based organizations. These partnerships will provide a broad base of **services** to families including family counseling, legal services, mediation, job training and job skills development, substance abuse treatment, and prevention, health maintenance, and personal mentoring. Local communities are encouraged to provide financial resources to support the pilot projects.

Pilot projects may be funded either by the Department or by other sources. Both funded and unfunded pilot projects may be able to offer child support incentives to participants, depending on the project plan or the extent of Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRUC) involvement, as determined by the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Collections.

Funded pilot projects are those initiated and funded in whole or in part by CSRUC after a published request for plan proposals. They must have an approved project plan, and must report statistics and results quarterly to CSRUC. The Department does not require unfunded pilot projects to have an approved project plan. However, unfunded pilot projects must report periodically to CSRUC. The degree of participation by CSRUC shall be determined by the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Collections based upon needs and resources.

By combining the Department's efforts with other state agencies as well as assisting community-based **collaboratives** to develop projects, the Department will ensure a more comprehensive and coordinated effort to assist parents to remain involved in the lives of their children.

These rules establish criteria for the parental obligation pilot projects, outline how CSRUC shall select the **funded** pilot projects, establish reporting requirements, and provide for termination of **CSRUC's** involvement. Only empowerment or decategorization committees are eligible to apply as projects.

These rules also establish four possible child support incentives that may be available to parents to encourage their participation in these pilots. The incentives that may be available to parents to encourage their participation in these pilots are as follows:

The following amendments are proposed.

Item 1. Amend 441-Title X, Support Recovery, to include **441—Chapter 100**.

Item 2. Adopt the following new chapter 100:

CHAPTER 100

CHILD SUPPORT PARENTAL OBLIGATION PILOT PROJECTS

PREAMBLE

This chapter describes the parental obligation pilot projects participated in or developed by the department of human services child support recovery unit (CSRU). The purpose of these pilot projects is to develop new ways to assist parents in overcoming the barriers which interfere with their fulfilling their obligations to their children. For the purpose of these rules, parental obligations include emotional and personal involvement of the parents, beyond simply meeting their financial obligations. In order to encourage participation by parents, CSRU may offer various incentives for participation. These incentives may be offered through projects whose plans have been approved by the bureau chief or through projects in which CSRU participates and for which the bureau chief approves of CSRU's offering any or all of the incentives.

441—100.1(78GA,SF2435) Definitions.

“Assigned support arrearages” means support arrearages for which all rights have been and shall remain assigned to the state of Iowa.

“Bureau chief” means the chief of the bureau of collections of the department of human services or the bureau chiefs designee.

(1) A one-time satisfaction of 15 percent of the amount when a participant pays the entire periodic support payment due in each of 6 consecutive calendar months.

(2) A one-time satisfaction of 35 percent of the amount when a participant pays the entire periodic support payment due in each of 12 consecutive calendar months.

(3) A one-time satisfaction of 80 percent of the amount when a participant pays the entire periodic support payment due in each of 24 consecutive calendar months.

c. A participant subject to an income withholding order shall be eligible for the satisfaction in this subrule if the sole reason for ineligibility is a disparity between the schedules of the participant's pay date and the scheduled date the payment is due.

d. A participant shall be eligible for a satisfaction under this subrule if the participant is no longer a participant, but has continued to pay the entire amount of that participant's periodic support payment without interruption.

441—100.3(78GA,SF2435) Application to be a funded pilot project. CSRU shall publish a request for project plans when it decides to initiate a pilot project and requests for grants exceed available funding. All applicants must be empowerment or decategorization groups.

100.3(1) Contents of request for project plans. The request for project plans shall contain the requirements for contents of the project plan, the stated goals of the project, the number of projects for which funding exists and any other parameter for the specific pilot project being advertised. The request shall also contain a deadline by which project plans must be submitted to the bureau chief.

*IOWA **CHILD** SUPPORT RECOVERY GRANT APPLICATION*
*Polk **County** Project DAD+*

**Iowa Child Support Recovery
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Collections**

Polk County Project DAD+

Submitted by:

**Polk County ~~Decategorization~~/Department of Human Services
1200 University Avenue, Suite A
Des Moines, IA 50314**

IOWA CHILD SUPPORT RECOVERY GRANT APPLICATION
Polk County Project DAD+

continued...

SERVICE	INCENTIVE	PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS
Public Awareness Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To educate the community on the importance of having two parents in children's lives To better understand the barriers parents face when they are not living together Identify resources to overcome the barriers that parents face when agreement can not be reached regarding co-parenting Educate the public on the new efforts on the part of Child Support Recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
* Two Tract Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers of child care, parenting services, and other professionals will gain knowledge in non-custodial parenting issues Providers of child care, parenting services, and other professionals will gain a working understanding of national models in fatherhood services Greater community will gain knowledge in non-custodial parenting and fatherhood issues Greater community will gain knowledge of local resources for non-custodial parents/dads Greater community will have an awareness of the need for ongoing support of the services provided to non-custodial parents/dads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration for the conference Providers will pay a fee for the conference
Community Leaders Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garner support and input from a variety of community perspectives (business, faith, etc.) Bring together a variety of community members that will support the fatherhood initiatives Provide community leadership for the issues faced by non-custodial parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to serve the community as a member of the Community Leadership Committee Willingness to learn about issues and services Willingness to educate others on the issues Willingness to promote the Project DAD+ agenda

Statement of project outcome goals, indicator/benchmarks, performance measures for indicators, programs and services.

The Polk County Project DAD+ program described in this proposal has two outcome goals.

- Children in Polk County will have the emotional and financial support of both parents.

IOWA CHILD SUPPORT RECOVERY GRANT APPLICATION
Polk County Project DAD+

person to watch the children until the other parent arrives, and a staff member to act as a communicative conduit for the parents. Communications may involve changes in time and/or location of visits or special needs of the **child(ren)**. A staff person will monitor all family interactions for feedback to relevant parties (i.e. courts, mediators).

Outcome Goal 2: Citizens of Polk County will have a greater awareness of the need for the involvement of both parents in the lives of their children.

Indicators/Benchmarks for Goal 2:

- A. Inquiries regarding the project and services offered.
- B. Media stories regarding the project.
- C. Brochure requests.
- D. Conference evaluations.

Performance Measure of Indicator for Goal 2:

- A. Hits on the web site containing the educational information will be tracked.
- B. Increased calls regarding contract services received by service providers.
- C. Media key word search will be measure at three month intervals.
- D. Attendance at the two tract conference will be tracked.
- E. Two tract conference participant surveys will be compiled and evaluated.

Programs & Services for Goal 2:

- A. Provide educational information on parenting, services and programs available, and navigating the systems to non-custodial parents/dads on the web site.
- B. Do a one-time mailing to non-custodial parents/dads using the "State individual **payor** list for Polk County" and working with appropriate agencies who serve the target population.
- * C. Plan, publicize and conduct a two tract conference, one tract for providers and one for community members with a nationally recognized speaker on male involvement/non-custodial parenting.
- D. Establish a Community Leaders Committee of high profile community members to give direction to the project.

The Project DAD+ program is a part of a larger community strategy titled "Polk County Fostering Male Involvement Program" which can be found in the appendix. A Promoting Safe & Stable Families grant from the Department of Human Services will provide participants in the Project DAD+ program an opportunity to be matched with a mentor. A mentor follows an individual in their day-to-day obstacles in a way that will help them develop ways to stay connected with their children. For example, a mentor may help with job opportunities and keeping a job, create a budget to include child support, or developing a calendar to schedule time with a **child(ren)**. The Promoting Safe

Budget Justification

Staff salary, benefits & travel expenses.

No funds are requested for this. Polk County Decategorization/Department of Human Services will administer the grant in-kind so that the entire amount can be used for services in the community.

Contract Services.

Contract Services to Child Care Resource & Referral - Total \$2,500

Description	Narrative	Budgeted Amount
Revision of web site	Parenting Monthly web site, a currently existing resource, will be modified to include banners and program information that result from this project.	\$2,500

Contract Services to Generations, Incorporated - Total \$30,900

Description	Narrative	Budgeted Amount
Supervised Visitations	Staff and transportation costs related to Supervised Visitation.	\$ 15,000
Neutral Exchange	Staff costs related to Neutral Exchange.	\$ 9,000
Family Mediation	Staff costs related to Family Mediation.	\$ 5,400
Brochure	Information on project services provided to the community.	\$ 1,500

Contract Services to Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa - Total \$16,600

Description	Narrative	Budgeted Amount
Conference Speaker & arrangements	Secure nationally recognized keynote speaker for two track conference for parents and professionals. Budget includes speaker fee, travel, lodging, facility rental, refreshments, conference expenses and other related expenses.	\$ 9,550
Monthly Presentations-set up & food	This includes a \$25 honorarium for presenters, facility rental, refreshments and other related expenses.	\$ 2,250
Public Awareness Campaign	PR and media services for approximately 16 hours per month at approximately \$26 per hour for nine months	\$ 3,600
Monthly Activities-set up & fees	This includes recreational and educational activity fees and announcement expenses.	\$ 1,200

efforts of the Human Services Planning Alliance provides opportunities to leverage additional community resources.

Cost to project Participants.

Clients in the Supervised Visitation will be assessed at the time of referral to establish their rate on a sliding fee scale for this service with the highest cost being \$35.00 per hour. Clients in the Neutral Exchange program and Family Mediation Services will be billed on the same sliding fee scale as in the Supervised Visitation with the highest cost being \$40.00 per hour for either service. The conference and monthly activities may have minimal costs to participants.

Sustainability of the Project.

* At the time of this grant preparation, the current project has been in existence for less than two months. This proposal will build and expand upon the services that have recently been created. Near the conclusion of the proposed project, we will be able to determine the extent of the unmet need as well as gauge the community's commitment to provide adequate resources for continuing these programs and services. Given the nature of the target population and little past experience, it is **difficult** to quantify the actual need as well as what resources are required to address that need.

We welcome the opportunity to participate in the shaping of federal, state and local policy and services supporting parental involvement in their children's lives. We expect that staff and agencies participating in this project, as well as clients, will share the lessons learned in this pilot project through a formal assessment.

Three **of the** community's major planning efforts: Empowerment, Healthy Polk 2010, and Comprehensive Strategy, have identified parental involvement in their children's lives as critical to a safe and healthy community. The broad array of community members involved in these planning efforts are interested in the outcomes of this project and plan to use the lessons learned for future programming decisions in the following ways:

- Results of this project will be reported to and monitored by those directly involved for immediate analysis and modifications.
- Results will be shared with the Human Services Planning Alliance and its subcommittees for assessing long-term needs and resources available.

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Our Children Need Your Help!

From 1978 through 1998, Iowa was *first in the nation* in laws and programs to enable children to maintain relationships with both parents after divorce or separation. Iowa had:

- the nation's first joint custody law
- the joint custody preference law which became a prototype for thirty-three other states
- the first law for make-up time for visitation time lost
- the first successful neutral drop-off/pick-up program for exchange of children by divorced or separated parents
- "the success story" (ABC News) in helping parents to work out their differences on joint custody and visitation
- Congress funded a program for all fifty states based on that successful program in Iowa

Not surprisingly, because of this equitable, balanced policy, Iowa also had the nation's highest rate of voluntary compliance with financial child support order.

Now, there's another side to the story. (over)

In the past eighteen months, Iowa *threw away* \$90,000 per year in federal funds appropriated to help children maintain a relationship with both parents after their parents divorce or separate.

- the first year's funding was reverted to the federal treasury
- the second year's funding was wasted on consult contracts and a two-month program so restricted that no one who needed the services could use them
- the third year's funding is being diffused to Councils of Government in 16 planning areas in amounts so small that it can't possibly help children to see their parents

Are federal access-visitation funds helping Iowa parents to obtain access to and enforce visitation with their children? Sadly, the answer is "No."

Our children need your help! Ask your state legislative candidates if they will vote to use federal access-visitation funds for the purpose intended by Congress. Refuse to vote for those who won't.

Paid for by Parents for Equal Access to Kids Political Action Committee,
Stephanie Netolicky, Treasurer, email:peakpacia@aol.com

Arguments against D.H.S. misappropriation of access-visitation funds

1) D.H.S. used administrative rules to deprive the public of a right conveyed by congress

a) Subtitle 'I' subsection (e)(1) states,. "Each state to which a grant is made under this section (1) may administer State programs funded with the grant directly or through grants to or contracts with courts, local public agencies, or nonprofit private entities;".

b) Section 17A.1 (2) of the Code of Iowa states "**Nothing** in this chapter is meant to discourage agencies from adopting procedures providing greater protections to the public or conferring additional rights to the public . . . nothing in this chapter is meant to abrogate in whole or in part any statute prescribing procedural duties for an agency which are greater than or in addition to those provided here." The administrative procedures act doesn't empower an agency to take away rights which have been conferred by statute by the legislature or by congress.

c) D.H.S. administrative rules restricted application for access-visitation funds to "**decat**" programs; "nonprofit private entities" were not given the opportunity, conferred by congress, to apply for the federal access-visitation funds

2) The stated purpose of Subtitle 'I' of the Welfare reform bill is for "programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children". D.H.S. has willfully and intentionally subverted the stated intent of Congress by:

a) reverting the first year, of funding to the federal treasury rather than permitting those funds to be allocated to a program which would deliver services to help noncustodial parents

b) wasted the second year funding on a consultant contract with Human Resources Consultants of Ames, which conducted focus groups to determine if there really is a problem with access-visitation -

[In fact, Iowa had received one of the demonstration grants under section 504 of the Family Support Act of 1988 and proved that, in 18 months, thousands of parents requested help to gain or enforce access to their children. The success of Iowa's demonstration grant was the reason Congress passed Subtitle 'I'.]

- and a tightly restricted two-month mediation and neutral drop-off program

[The neutral drop-off program wastefully committed \$30,000 to three agencies to be available for neutral drop-off without any coherent plan for bringing families into the program while refusing to assist families which needed neutral drop-off services. Not surprisingly, when the \$30,000 was gone, no clients had been served.]

c) of the \$111,000 third year of funding, that portion committed to central Iowa, through "**decat**", D.H.S. is giving the funding to

Planned Parenthood and an agency which acknowledges in the grant application that it has been in the business of providing services to noncustodial parents for two months.

Where is the last place in the world noncustodial parents would go for help to obtain access or enforce visitation with their children? Planned Parenthood.

Nancy Thoma, the director of the Bureau of Collections, and Jean Nesbitt, her supervisor within the D.H.S. hierarchy, claim that "decat" is presumed to be able to identify the best providers within the community and that they are powerless and totally absolved of blame if "decat" overlooks a potential provider of services when they draft a grant application.

Let's return to the fact that Iowa received a demonstration grant under **Sec 504** of the Family Support Act of 1988, the statutory predecessor of Subtitle 'I'. Congress, the White House, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, and ABC News looked at Iowa's program and concluded, "This is a great program. We need to offer this program nationwide." Every year since Subtitle 'I' was proposed, the director of this program in Iowa has been called to Washington, D.C. to conduct seminars on how to run an access-visitation program for grant applicants and recipients from other states. This agency has provided services specifically cited by Congress in Subtitle 'I' for over nineteen years and neutral drop-off, with the assistance of Around the Clock Child Care, continuously for the past nine years. The director of Polk County "decat" has repeatedly and emphatically stated that she told the United Way employee assigned to draft the grant application to include this agency in the process. She failed to "find" this agency until, after the funds were allocated and the grant application was written, at **4:47** p.m. on the Friday before the Monday noon that the application was to be submitted.

Further, the claim by Nancy Thoma and Jean Nesbitt that their hands are tied is not entirely credible: a) they acknowledged that they were consulted by "decat" several times as the grant application was being drafted; b) **Nancy Thoma and Jean Nesbitt returned the submitted grant application for redrafting with regard to \$9,500 initially requested by Planned Parenthood for a "statewide conference" which clearly is not allowed under Subtitle 'I'; and** c) they approved the final grant. At the very least, while providing all this technical assistance, Nancy Thoma and Jean Nesbitt selectively chose to ignore the exclusion of an agency from the "decat" process which would have contributed materially to the success of the program.

3) Is the program approved by D.H.S. designed to serve as many noncustodial parents as possible or to obstruct noncustodial parent access

Nancy Thoma characterized this year's access-visitation grant to central Iowa as a "pilot program" and noted that it might take most of the 18 month grant cycle for the public to learn about the services offered under this grant.

By contrast, in 1991-93, in less than 18 months, with no public information campaign, Fathers for Equal Rights served thousands of clients. Further, in thirty day follow-up surveys tabulated by Policy Studies, Inc. of Denver, Colorado, over 96% of those clients reported that services offered by Fathers for Equal Rights were somewhat helpful or very helpful in solving the access problem.

Further, as previously mentioned, with the second year of access-visitation funding, D.H.S. funded, in part, a tightly restricted two-month mediation and neutral drop-off program. Fathers for Equal Rights, Lutheran Social Services, Children and Families of Iowa, and the customer service staff of the Bureau of Collections were asked to do referrals into that program. Five weeks into the **program**, it was reported that 100% of referrals into the program had come from Fathers for Equal Rights. No final report on referrals into the program was offered, but a reasonable person might conclude that those statistics didn't change appreciably in the last three weeks.

An advertising agency consulted in 1991 reported that Fathers for Equal Rights had higher name recognition among Des Moines residents responding to a telephone survey than the then governor of Iowa. One only needs to count the times our telephone rings on an average day to be certain that this is the place parents call when they can't see their kids.

**Research has
demonstrated that
children need on-going
care and nurturing
from both parents.
Children suffer if
they lose access
to one parent.**



Fathers For Equal Rights, Inc.

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Responsible Parenthood: Taking Care of Our Children



Building the Case in Iowa

**A Report to Governor Thomas J. Vilsack
Interagency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood
December, 2000**

Executive Summary

Responsible Parenthood: Taking Care of Our Children Building the Case in Iowa

The Interagency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood was established pursuant to Executive Order 15 to respond to the following key questions.

Key Questions:

What information is available to determine whether Iowa children receive emotional and financial support of both parents? What are the benefits, opportunities, barriers, and promising practices of maintaining and securing the involvement of both parents in the support of children?

- *The importance of the issue* became apparent.

In Iowa, there are approximately 720,223 children under the age of 18. Approximately 54,140 children live in poverty with only one parent present in the household. In any given month, there are at least 38,505 cases in which the child support is not paid for that month. One indicator of emotional stress for **children** is the dissolution of marriage of **their** parents. Over half of the annual marriage dissolutions in Iowa involve minor children (5,477).

- Active support of both parents *benefits* the education, health, well being and the economic security of their children.
- The Interagency Work Group conducted *an assessment of state programs in Iowa*, which serve parents and children. As part of the assessment, the Workgroup identified barriers that may impede both parents' active involvement with their children. The barriers may be policy and/or procedures. The service *system appears fragmented* in consistently providing support to both parents regarding their parental responsibilities. At times, the absent parent is ignored. In some cases, no effort is made to include the absent parent.
- The Work Group submits sixteen recommendations. Most of the recommendations are directed to state government. The remainder is directed to a proposed citizen task force.

Recommendations for state government include:

1. Remove Barriers in Policy and Practice
2. Increase Awareness of the Public and Professionals
3. Implement Cross Training of Disciplines
4. Create a Network to Support Families in Partnership with Communities
5. Improve Communication Across Delivery System
6. Offer Parents Opportunities to Increase Knowledge and Skills
7. Ensure Availability of Resource Guides by Local Areas
8. Develop Guidance for Staff when Working with Families where Both Parents Cannot be Safely Involved in the Child's Life.
9. Encourage the Reporting of the Impact of Services to Families
10. Continue Opportunities for State Agencies to Discuss Parenthood Issues
11. Develop Partnerships Across State Agencies to Implement Policy and Programs
12. Communicate Lessons Learned from Projects Underway in Iowa
13. Create a Task Force to Champion Responsible Parenthood.

Recommendations for the proposed task force include:

14. Articulate a **Vision of** What It Means to Support Families
15. Broaden the Scope of the People Who Are Engaged in this Effort
16. Organize a Public Awareness Campaign

These recommendations for action reflect a beginning point for a **coordinated and focused effort** of the public through a proposed task force and state government to address the need to support both parents in their most important work: raising their children.

Friday, December 29, 2000

**Responsible Parenthood: Taking Care of Our Children
Building the Case in Iowa**

Executive Summary

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Appendix A What Is Happening in Selected States: A Summary

Appendix B What Are Some of the Leading States Doing?

Appendix C Who Are Some of the Leading National Fatherhood Organizations and What Are They Doing?

Attachment • Executive Order Fifteen

Responsible Parenthood: Taking Care of Our Children Building the Case in Iowa

I. Background

In Executive Order Number 15, Governor Thomas J. Vilsack addresses the issue of responsible parenthood. The Executive Order acknowledges that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents. Children who have two parents actively and positively engaged in their lives have a greater chance for success than do children who have only one parent actively involved in their lives. In most single parent families, the absent parent is the father. To begin the efforts of ensuring that both parents are involved in the lives of their children, Governor Vilsack established a state Interagency Work Group.

An Interagency Work Group was directed to identify barriers within state policy and procedures that may act to impede the development of strong emotional and financial bonds of support between both parents and their children. (See attachment for complete text for Executive Order Fifteen.) This report outlines the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Work Group.

A. Interagency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood

Executive Order Number 15, signed on March 14, 2000, created the Interagency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood. The Work Group is comprised of representatives from the Departments of Human Services, Public Health, Corrections, Education, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Iowa **Workforce** Development and the Empowerment Board. The Executive Order outlines several tasks to be completed by the work group. The tasks include:

- ◆ identifying barriers within policies/procedures and practices that deter the involvement of both parents,
- ◆ identifying promising practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children,
- ◆ identifying opportunities that may exist among programs administered by departments to assist the absent parent in providing emotional and financial support,
- ◆ attempting to quantify benefits of increasing the level of involvement of both parents, and
- ◆ proposing recommendations to remove barriers.

B. Key Assumptions

The Work Group adopted several underlying assumptions in addressing the issues of responsible parenthood. The assumptions include:

- parents need to be actively and positively involved with their children's lives regardless of the parents' living situation or marital status,
- the absence of fathers is harmful to children,

- in situations in which fathers threaten the health and well being of women and children, care must be taken to assure the safety of family members,
- parents, in addition to their parenting responsibilities, may be addressing such issues as poverty, lack of education, substance and drug abuse, poor job skills, and lack of employment.

II. Scope of the Issue

Various data sources give some indication of the estimated number of children in Iowa and circumstances that may impact the children (poverty, dissolution of marriages, children born out of wedlock and child support statistics). The magnitude of the issue is reflected in the numbers. In addition, national research on the consequences of these risk factors is noted.

A. Number of Iowa Children Impacted

1. Children in Iowa Under the Age of 18

There are 720,223 children in Iowa under the age of 18 according to the U.S. Census Bureau 1999 estimates. The percentage (25.1%) is comparable to the U.S. percentage (25.7%) of children under the age of 18.

2. Number of Children in Iowa Under the Age of 18 in Poverty

There are 100,262 children in Iowa under the age of 18 living in poverty according U.S. Census Bureau County Estimates for 1997. Approximately 54% of these children live with only one parent present in the household.

3. Dissolutions of Marriages in Iowa

There were 9,737 dissolutions in Iowa in 1999. The number of dissolutions has been under 10,000 for the last three consecutive years. (Goudy, Burke and Hanson, Iowa **Counties:Selected** Population Trends, Vital Statistics, and Socioeconomic Data, 2000 Edition)

In 1998, 55.2% of dissolutions involved minor children (under 18 years of age). The number of children impacted in the 1998 dissolutions was 9,923. (Vital Statistics of Iowa, 1998, prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Iowa Department of Public Health)

4. Children in Iowa Born Out of Wedlock

In 1998, there were 37,262 live births in Iowa. Of the live births, 10,149 (27.2%) were born out of wedlock. Of the out of wedlock births, 32.1% of them were born to teen mothers, 19 years old and younger. For African American women, 72.3% of live births were out of wedlock. (Vital Statistics of Iowa, 1998, prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Iowa Department of Public Health)

5. Births to Teenagers

The number of births to women less than 19 years of age in 1998, was 3,940 (10.6% of all live births). The number of African American teen births in 1998 was 276 (25.5% of all African American live births). (Vital Statistics of Iowa, 1998, prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Iowa Department of Public Health)

6. Number of Children whose Paternity Cannot be Established

Based on 1998 Iowa Birth Certification file, there were 12.5% live born babies who did not have their father's information available at birth. (Vital Statistics of Iowa, 1998, prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Iowa Department of Public Health)

7. Children Not Receiving Child Support

In any given month, children in approximately 38,505 cases with current support due receive no payments toward current support. (Bureau of Collections, Iowa Department of Human Services, 2000)

B. Consequences of Not Paying Attention to the Risk Factors

The current body of research indicates that risky behaviors and negative consequences increase when children do not have the support of both parents.

- **Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse. Seventy five per cent of all adolescents in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes.** --Source: US Dept. of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.
- **Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school. 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.** --Sources: us Dept. of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993. Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence.
- **Three out of four teenage suicides occur in households where a parent has been absent. Ninety per cent of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.** -- Sources: Elshtain, Jean Bethke, "Family Matters: The Plight of America's Children." The Christian Century, July 1993. Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence.
- **"... children raised apart from one of their parents are less successful in adulthood. . . , and.. many of their problems result from a loss of income, parental involvement and supervision, and ties to the community.** -- Source: McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994 Growing Up with a Single Parents, p 134.
- **Children in single-parent families are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers than their peers who grow up with two parents.** --Source: us Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics. "National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

III. Benefits of Both Parents' Involvement with Children

Much of the research on responsible parenthood focuses on defining the consequences of risk factors rather than quantifying the benefits of increased active support of both parents. The following is a sample of the research on the benefits of active support of both parents.

A. Education

When both parents are involved in the child's education e.g., attending school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at school, class events, there is a higher likelihood that the child will receive high grades and enjoy school and reduce the likelihood that a grade will be repeated. --Source: Nord, C.W., Brimhall, D. & West, J. Fathers Involvement in Schools, 1997, U.S. Department of Education in "What Do Fathers Contribute to Children's Well Being" Child Trends Research Brief.

B. Health and Well Being

The involvement and support of the father is the best predictor that the mother will receive adequate prenatal care. Prenatal care ensures a healthy start for children. --Source: Fathers A Huge Influence For Young Children, Center for Public Policy Priorities.

According to a Gallup Poll, 90.3 percent of Americans agree that "fathers make a unique contribution to their children's lives" -- Source: Gallup Poll, 1996. National Center for Fathering "Father Figures". Today's Father 4.1 (1996).

A study on parent-infant attachment found that fathers who were affectionate, spent time with their children, and overall had a positive attitude were more likely to have securely attached **infants**. --Source: Cox, M.J. et al. "Prediction of Infant-Father and Infant-Mother Attachment". **Developmental Psychology** 28 (1992): 474-483.

Father-child interaction has been shown to promote a child's physical well-being, perceptual abilities, and competency for **relatedness with** others, even at a young age.--Source: Krampe, E. M. and P.D. Fair-weather. "Father Presence and Family Formation: A theoretical Reformation." Journal of **Family Issues** 14.4 (December 1993): 572-591.

C. Economic Security

Economic security is important to promote the well being of the child. Both parents supporting the child financially reduce risk factors associated with poverty. Poverty levels are reduced when both parents are present: single parent families have a poverty rate of 46% while two parent families have a rate of approximately 10%. --Source: Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood, 1999 Edition, National Center for Children in Poverty.

IV. Current Community Services and Projects

The Interagency Work Group conducted a preliminary survey to assess the services being offered through state agencies to support both parents in their parenting responsibilities and/or specific services created to include the fathers.

The findings of the survey reveal great inconsistency. For example, some of the community correctional facilities provide parenting training for inmates, but many do not. There were few services identified to assist young fathers.

In the human service delivery system, some services that assist families do not systematically include both parents in the service plan. The legal authority to include both parents is not provided, consequently, the non-custodial parent is not eligible for the services.

Two state agencies have received funding to assist non-custodial parents with their parental financial obligations and employment skills. The Department of Human Services is administering Parental Obligation Projects and Iowa Workforce Development is administering federal Welfare to Work grants.

A. Parental Obligation Pilots

Since 1998, the General Assembly has allocated TANF block grant money which is combined with federal Access and Visitation Grant to establish pilot projects to address barriers for low income non custodial parents as they seek to provide emotional and financial support to their children. The funding is to be used to implement local strategies to keep both parents involved with their children. In addition, child support provides incentives for participants.

Four projects were **funded** in 1999:

- **Cass/Mills/Montgomery** County Decategorization: This project, in a very rural area, includes post-divorce/post-relationship classes to discuss a variety of parenting issues with both **parents; fatherhood** seminars – group meetings to discuss a wide variety of topics; Saturday with My Dad – parent/child activities; and public awareness activities.
- Muscatine County Decategorization: This project, in a mid-sized county with a mix of rural and light industry, includes a neutral exchange site where children can be safely exchanged for a visit **with** the noncustodial parent; comprehensive case planning and referral for all participants; a wide variety of supervised father/child activities including fatherhood groups and parent skills training; and public awareness activities.
- Pottawattamie County Decategorization: This project, in a more metropolitan area includes providing in-home assessments for fathers; individual support for fathers; support groups; father/child activities; mediation for parents; and public awareness activities.
- Polk County Decategorization: This project in Des Moines, includes providing neutral exchange sites, supervised visitation, and mediation services on a sliding fee scale, partially underwritten by grant funds.

In 2000, the General Assembly appropriated \$250,000 of TANF block grant money which is combined with federal Access and Visitation funds. Three additional pilot projects are being funded:

- Howard/Allamakee/Winneshiek/Clayton County (HAWC): This project will provide assessment and referral services as part of developing a "family plan", transportation and support to children who are involved with the Children in the Middle program, stipends to parents for completing the classes, a neutral exchange program, and family mentoring.
- Siouxland Human Investment Program (SHIP): This project will provide job-related training/mentoring services, mediation services, neutral exchange, mentoring and assessment services.
- Polk County Decategorization: This project will expand to offer a number of additional services as part of a much larger "Fostering Male Involvement" project. This project is funded from a variety of sources, only one of which is this grant. The activities funded under this grant include supervised visitation, family mediation, neutral exchange sites, fatherhood support groups, parent/child activities, and a public awareness campaign.

B. Workforce Development Grants

In 2000, a portion of the Welfare to Work dollars has been used to fund local initiatives. The purpose of the grants is to encourage more local partners to use **innovative service** approaches in the Welfare to Work program. Three projects are being funded:

- Urban Dreams, Creative Visions and Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium: The demonstration program will serve 30 participants and will target non-custodial parents, including ex-offenders and individuals with multiple barriers and substance abuse. The project places a major emphasis on developing "soft skills" necessary to retaining employment and support services.
- Eastern Iowa Community College District, Iowa East Central TRAIN: In this project, judges in Region 9 counties will have the option to court order non-custodial parents to the program. The judges will receive an evaluation of the parents' work history, educational level, math and reading scores, and lists of potential jobs with wage rates to assist the judges in determining the appropriate child support orders. Up to 36 eligible persons will be enrolled in Welfare to Work.
- Boys and Girls Home and Family Services, Western Iowa Tech Community College: The program will assist 146 eligible persons to obtain unsubsidized employment.

The program will provide transitional services, enhanced job search, group therapy workshops, substance abuse evaluations, in-home services, including peer support and role modeling, transportation and child care.

The pilots are relatively new or are in the beginning implementation phase. Consequently, long term results have not been accomplished. However, data are being collected. It is anticipated that in the future, these pilots will inform current policy and practice.

V. Suggested Practices: What Has Been Learned From Other States

In many states, the approach has been to create separate programs that focus on the absent parent, in most cases it is the father. Many of the new programs have not yet generated concrete results. The lack of results may also be due to the lack of evaluation measures of the programs. Cost effectiveness and cost benefit evaluations have not been conducted. Rather accountability is measured by process, number of participants, amount of service, and cost of programs. The following is a list of best practices and common denominators from other state "fatherhood initiatives".

Common Denominators of Successful Fatherhood Program

- Grassroots support through information:
 - Engage the public and media on the importance of fathers without diminishing the importance of mothers.
 - Show the benefits to children. It is an urgent message.
 - Target the message to the public/mother/father.
- Involve those who have a stake:
 - Fathers:
 - Mentoring/talking/supporting in a father to father approach
 - Fathers participating in planning for themselves in the programs are more likely to take responsibility for the result.
 - Community:
 - Benefit from the strong families and pay when there is a disconnection.
 - Potential resources are many. Flexibility needs to be provided to allow the new combinations and partners.
 - Faith Community:
 - Offers opportunity for financial and in-kind resources
 - Supports the value/ importance parents
- Innovation
 - 3 Build on what already exists but think outside the box in combining services and resources, and partners that help fathers support their children.
 - Be flexible in the process and focus on results.
- Incentives
 - Develop methods that encourage fathers to overcome barriers
 - Child support incentives like partial satisfaction of debt owed to the state or lowered income-withholding amounts.

- Opportunities for new job skills or work through workforce development
- Offer tickets for father child activities

Sources: Map and Track, State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood, 1999 Edition. National Coalition for Children in Poverty. National Fatherhood Initiative. The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization. The National Center for Fathering. Effective Strategies for Working with Young Fathers, MELD, 1997. Restoring Fathers to Families and Communities. A State Policy-makers Guide to Fatherhood, Social Policy Action Network, 2000. Involving Males in Preventing Teen Pregnancy, A Guide for Program Planners, The Urban Institute, 1997. Broke but not Deadbeat, Reconnecting Low-income Fathers and Children, National Conference of State Legislatures, 1999.

VI. Identification of Barriers in State Policy/Procedures

Many barriers exist within state policies and procedures that effect the emotional and financial bonds between children and their parents. Barriers are both unintentional and intended. The Work Group identified barriers to responsible parenthood that exist across the state agencies included in this project. Each agency has a detailed list of its identified barriers. The lists can be requested from the representatives on the Work Group.

Barriers in State Policy/Procedures

- A. Office Hours – Services are offered only during the business day that limits employed parents access to services.
- B. Targeted Populations – Services are targeted for a specific population in an effort to contain costs. Eligibility requirements limit the population to be served. Consequently, there are parents who do not receive needed services.
- C. No Incentive for Both Parents Being Involved – When children are being served, there are no requirements that both parents are involved. Often only one parent is asked to participate which, in most cases; is the mother.
- D. Requires More Effort – More effort which includes resources, time and training of staff is necessary to include both parents.
- E. Staff Uncomfortable in Delivering Services to ‘Fractured Families’ – Providing services to families, where issues have not been resolved, may escalate the family difficulties.
- F. Lack of Expectation that Fathers be Involved – Services have been designed to serve mothers and children. Often, fathers have not been considered in the delivery of the service.

- G. Fragmented Delivery System – There is no systematic approach for wrapping services around the entire family.
- H. Lack of Affordable and Available Services – Services that are often needed are not available or are offered at a cost that is prohibitive.
- I. Focus has been on when Families are in Trouble – Little attention has been paid to families before their situation escalates to a crisis.
- H. Timeliness of Prevention – Educational information that might prevent problems is not offered at opportune times.
- J. Control of Policy/Practice is Diffuse - Policies may be independently created and implemented by federal, state, and local delivery systems without any consistency or coordination.

VII. Recommendations

The Work Group has sixteen recommendations and proposes a locus of responsibility for carrying out the recommendations. Most of the recommendations are directed to state government. Others are directed to a proposed citizen task force.

A. State Government Action

State government can play an important role in supporting parents and their children. The following recommendations encompass a variety of strategies and actions:

1. Remove Barriers in Policy and Procedures - Recognizing that budgets have already been submitted to the Governor and that to change policy may require a change in the allocation of resources, it is recommended that further exploration be conducted by the state agencies in addressing these barriers.
2. Increase Awareness of the Public and Professionals - Raising awareness that including both parents in the lives of their children is critical. Changing our thinking about the roles of mothers and fathers requires a cultural shift.
 - a) Engage local print and electronic media in emphasizing the importance of fathers without diminishing the importance of mothers.
3. Implement Cross Training of Disciplines - Workers within each discipline should be aware of common knowledge areas regarding families that might not typically be within their discipline e.g., how to deal with violent behavior in a family.
4. Create A Network to Support Families in Partnership with Communities - The delivery system could be designed to 'familize' rather than to 'individualize', in other words, the family as a whole is considered.

Many of the current programs in Iowa and other states segment the family. Too often, the opportunity is missed to systematically deal with both parents. Attempts are not consistently made to engage both parents; rather the parent who is physically present is relied upon to represent both parents. Problem solving utilizing both parents' perspectives has the potential to increase the likelihood that both parents will support the actions of their joint problem solving efforts. The family should be viewed as a whole regardless of marital status or custodial arrangements.

5. Improve Communication Across Delivery Systems - Continue to enhance communication throughout the system at the provider and policy levels.

6. Offer both parents opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills in raising children.

7. Ensure Availability of Resource Guides by Local Areas Ensure that both providers and families have access to the listing of available resources to provide for the well being of the family in their area. The Work Group was not able to identify a comprehensive list of local resources of parenting services. An additional effort to compile current and updated lists of local resources is recommended.

8. Develop guidance to staff who work directly with families regarding the limited situations where both parents cannot be safely involved in the child's life.

9. Encourage the reporting of the impact of services on the family's well being - Support data collection and analysis (what does the Iowa data reveal, what are the implications for policy and practice). Particular attention should be paid to minority families and teen parents.

10. Continue expectations and providing opportunities for state agencies to discuss the issue of responsible parenthood.

11. Develop partnerships within and across state agencies to implement policy and programs that focus on the well being of the family.

12. Ensure that state agencies are aware of the lessons learned from the existing and new projects that are targeted at increasing parental involvement.

13. Create a task force to champion this effort- Creating a task force could enhance the visibility of the cause as well as serving as the body who keeps the attention focus on the issues. The group could also serve as a catalyst.

B. Proposed Task Force Action

Preliminary actions by the proposed task force may include the following:

14. Articulate a vision of what it means to support families- A task force could propose a vision to the Governor of what all Iowans need to do to value and support parents in raising their children. A common vision will ensure that all parts of the system are operating from the same perspective; a shared understanding of the common goals. State government can be held accountable to support the vision.

15. Broaden the scope of people who are engaged in this effort - Recruit more representatives beyond the state agencies who represent diverse populations, ages, consumers, business and community.

16. Organize a public awareness campaign in conjunction with state agencies that would heighten the awareness of the importance of both parents' involvement in the lives of their children.

These recommendations for action reflect a beginning point for a coordinated and focused effort of the public through a task force and state agencies to address the need to support both parents in their most important work: raising their children. Although state agencies can contribute with significant actions that will impact parents and their children, a task force can engage a larger public and offer a more diverse perspective. The joint effort can support the well being of Iowa families ensuring that all children have both parents involved in their lives.

Submitted by: Jessie Rasmussen, Director, Department of Human Services
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Appendix A

**WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN
SELECTED STATES?**

A SUMMARY

What's Happening in Fatherhood?

July, 2000

Based on interviews with selected states

Eleven states were selected to be interviewed based upon their being recognized and cited as leaders in fatherhood programs, or because their programs have been acknowledged by national organizations as being particularly effective in services to involve fathers. Many of these states have been the sites of national pilots and demonstration projects. The states interviewed include: California (many demonstration projects), Colorado (a fatherhood commission), Connecticut (examination of policy, multiple programs), Florida (the generally recognized leader), Illinois (many programs, excellent statewide public awareness campaign), Indiana (many demonstration grants), Minnesota (recognized leader), Maryland (site of many pilots), Missouri (many pilots, very effective integrated programming), North Carolina (recognized national leader), Virginia (fatherhood commission, many programs). All were asked to address the following areas. Their answers have been abstracted below.

Cost/benefit ratio

- Most states have no data. A few are just beginning to gather data, but expect it to be at least a year before they have anything. All believe that the immediate dollar benefits are much less important than future benefits which are less tangible.
- Los Angeles County has been able to have participant and control groups in their Parents Fair Share demonstration project. They found a 12% difference in child support payments between participants and members of the control group. In addition many fewer enforcement activities were necessary.
- Florida found that they took in \$4 for every \$1 spent in fatherhood activities.

Policy/practice barriers to fatherhood

- Most states have done no formal assessment of government policies and practices.
- Colorado will convene a policy study group per new legislation.
- Connecticut convened a committee to examine policy as it pertained to each of the service initiatives in their legislation. It has taken them a full year thus far. They have just collated their research and recommendations. They focused on several specific strategic areas, which include:
 - ♦ Support Fatherhood Initiative goals.
 - ♦ Assist and prepare men for the emotional, legal, financial, and educational responsibilities of fatherhood.
 - ♦ Promote the establishment of paternity at childbirth.
 - ♦ Promote public education concerning the emotional, social, financial, and educational responsibilities of fatherhood.
 - ♦ Integrate state and local services for families.
 - ♦ Create a statewide inventory of services available to support fathers.
 - ♦ Develop and implement demonstration/research sites.

- Florida convened a committee per their legislation to review all state policies and to ensure that all new legislation considers responsible fatherhood. They also used regional groups. They specifically targeted family law as problematic.
- Virginia has worked mostly with practitioners who work with fathers directly.

Educational programs

- Most states (nearly all) have a wide range of programs, often locally based, which offer at least Adult Basic Education, job skills training, and parenting skills training. Much of this is offered through guided support groups. Often the leaders are former participants.

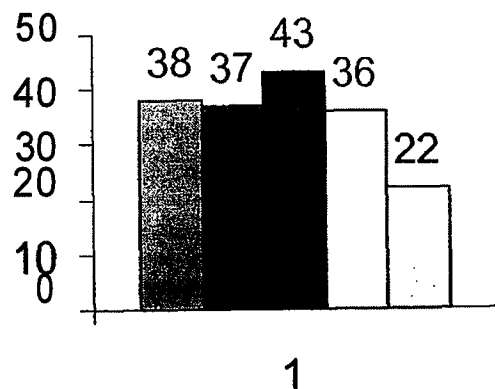
Best practices

- The most consistently cited is to have support groups using former participants as group leaders. Florida's support groups become strong and self-sustaining, drawing in members and maintaining support. They emphasize the need for the groups to be same-culture throughout.
- Colorado strongly recommends "Bootcamp for Young Dads", a program based in Irvine, CA. It works with young men before birth to give them basic understanding of needed skills. Colorado follows up with long-term support groups and newsletters.
- Several states have initiated projects to help dads secure enforcement of visitation orders and to help them with access to courts to secure more favorable orders.
- It is crucial to have a wide range of public awareness activities: multi-media, e.g., print, radio, billboards, TV, brochures and eye-catching pamphlets. Florida believes it's crucial to involve dads in designing content and graphics, as dads know best what they need to know and what's most likely to get attention.
- Use public schools to teach parenting skills and life development skills as well as too-early parenting prevention.
- Ask programs to be creative and not to always focus on child support collections since parents offer much more than simply money to support their children.
- The top states (Virginia and Florida), in fact most states, worked extensively with the national organizations to help them be on the cutting edge: National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF), National Center for Fathering (NCF). Iowa has a program in which NFI is working in the correctional institution at Rockwell City with incarcerated dads.

Appendix B

**WHAT ARE SOME
OF
THE LEADING STATES
DOING?**

What are States Doing?



- ☒ Promoting public awareness
- ☒ Working to prevent pregnancy
- ☒ Enhancing fathers as economic providers
- ☐ Promoting fathers as nurturers
- ☐ Building leadership capacity

State	Primary Contact Person	Other Contact People	Cost/Benefit Data	Policy/Practice Barriers in Government
California	Ed Flores, 916-654-1214	Linda Jenkins, 323-832-7216; Chuck Adams, 323-260-3861	Some from Parents' Fair Share and also some cost/benefit data. Long term collections data. 12% difference between control group and participant group.	Men identify arrearages and size of then as barriers. Court facilitator has helped them file their own downward modification. CA charges 10% interest on arrearages.
Colorado	Jim Garcia, 303-837-8466 xl 106	Chuck Ault, St. Joseph's Hospital, 303-866-8280; Debbie Sykes, Program Coordinator, 949-786-3146, Irvine, CA	No. At a recent conference, funders were clear that results will take years to evaluate.	In last legislative session, a resolution was introduced giving the fatherhood council authority to convene a policy study group to make recommendations regarding state policy. This group has not yet been convened.
Connecticut	Tom Horan, Public Assistance Consultant within IV-D, 860-424-5270	Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Acting Director of Strategic Planning, 860-424-4905	No.	CT created an interagency committee, representing all government agencies to perform a detailed examination of state practice/policy to make it more father-friendly. This is a part of implementing the fatherhood initiative legislation. They used multiple workgroups.

State	Primary Contact Person	Other Contact People	Cost/Benefit Data	Policy/Practice Barriers in Government
Florida	Jerry Smith, 850-488-4952		Other than programs which specifically focus on repaying child support, their programs have focussed on parenting involvement and skills. A cost/benefit ratio of 1:4.	All as a part of the fatherhood initiative legislation: established a coalition to perform all legislatively mandated duties, identified gaps in services to fathers that result in obstacles or barriers to responsible fatherhood, monitored legislative developments to ensure that responsible fatherhood was included in public policy planning and implementation, made legislative recommendations to remove obstacles/barriers, developed regional subcommittees. Particularly identified the area of family law as fraught with barriers.
Illinois	Cory Burris, 217-782-6973, Joseph Bishop, 312-353-8416, Joseph Mason, Illinois Child Support, 312-793-0193	Geneva Evans Bishop, dhhs, 312-353-8416	Increase collections 15% - 20% in target group	Nothing yet. No formal plans to do any review of policy.

State	Primary Contact Person	Other Contact People	Cost/Benefit Data	Policy/Practice Barriers in Government
Maryland	Johnny Rice, Deputy Director, Office of Community Initiatives, 41 0- 767-6681	Anthony Williams, 361-2185	Not completed yet; most successful outcomes aren't monetary	Different community based forums have stated that they are aware of many barriers, but no formal review.
Missouri	Clayvon Wesley, (314) 877-2069		No.	Nothing yet. No formal plans to do any review of policy.
Virginia	Ron Clark, Virginia Fatherhood Campaign, 804- 692-0400		No.	Much work with practitioners who deal directly with fathers. Young men need an advocate to deal with child support. Courts attitude of siding with mothers. Working with local offices for culture shift. Nothing yet with formal state policy. All work so far has been with agencies.

Appendix C

**WHO ARE SOME OF THE
LEADING NATIONAL FATHERHOOD
ORGANIZATIONS
AND
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?**

Comparison of Major National Fatherhood Programs

National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI); Gaithersburg, MD (1994)	To improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children who grow up with loving, committed and respected fathers.	Public education highlighting the importance of fathers; coalition building across the nation; personal training for men to become better fathers.	Fatherhood resources; programs for incarcerated fathers (including Rockwell City, IA); annual conference; TA on program development evaluation; media kits on importance of fatherhood.	Wade Horn, Ph. D., Pres.; closely allied with conservative religious organizations.
Institute for Responsible Fatherhood & Family Revitalization; Washington, D.C. (1984)	Turn the hearts of fathers toward their children.	Uses a curriculum designed to change the hearts and attitudes of men first, then deal with job training, illiteracy, and overcoming other barriers. Focus on involving men in emotionally supporting their families first.	Operates programs in 7 major metropolitan cities (Cleveland, Milwaukee, San Diego, Nashville, Washington, D.C., Yonkers, NY); use novel approach of husband/wife couple living in neighborhood as "model parents".	Charles Ballard, President and CEO; conservative viewpoint; sites using their model become program "affiliates".
The Fatherhood Project, New York, NY. (1981)	A national research and education project that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men's involvement in child rearing.	Media presentations; ongoing research into best practices for a father-friendly workplace; publications and seminars for the public, workers, and managers.	State Initiatives on Responsible Fatherhood: an examination of policies and programs in all 50 states that will yield an understanding of government's role in fostering fatherhood; The Male Involvement Project: a national training initiative helping Head Start and early childhood programs get fathers involved in the lives of their children.	James Levine, Ph.D., Dir.; longest running national initiative on fatherhood. Major focus on dads who must balance work and home life.

National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF); Philadelphia, PA (1994)	To improve the life chances of children and the efficacy of families and to support and conduct the dissemination of research that advances the understanding of father involvement.	Interdisciplinary policy research which is practice-focused and practice-based. All research is developed around seven Core Learnings distilled from the experiences of practitioners and programs that serve fathers. Intent is to expand the knowledge base on father involvement and to contribute to critical discussion in policy.	"FatherLit" research data base; Publish literature reviews on a variety of fatherhood topics; *Convene discussion forum's of researchers, policy makers and practitioners to craft and implement agendas to respond to the needs of father and families; Provide presentations at meetings and conferences.	They base everything on empirical research. Affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania
National Center for Fathering (NCF); Kansas City, MO (1990)	To inspire and equip men to be better fathers .	Practical and applied research on fathers and athering to develop resources and ecommendations for dads in nearly every athering situation.	Nationwide radio program; seminars for dads; weekly free newsletter which contains practical suggestions for dads' involvement; technical assistance to government, social agencies, private sector on fatherhood issues; research on fatherhood issues; presentations for conferences	Private non-profit, Ken Canfield Exec. Dir.; provide direct TA geared to raising public awareness of the impact of "fatherlessness" and "fatherfulness".
National Center for Strategic Non-Profit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL); Washington, D.C. (1996)	To improve the governance and administration of non-profit tax-exempt organizations and strengthen community leadership through family and neighborhood empowerment; to help community-based organizations and public agencies better serve young , low-income single fathers and fragile families.	Providing TA to public agencies to develop programs for fragile families; assist in developing partnerships; planning and facilitation of conferences; professional development for building partnerships and related activities; Partners for Fragile Families initiative to help low income fathers share the legal , financial and emotional responsibilities of parenthood.	Peer Learning College (gathering of child support colleagues to encourage sharing of innovative approaches to involving fathers); share information about state-of-the-art child support enforcement; identify cultural and policy barriers to fathers' involvement; identify strategies for intervention and cross-agency collaboration; leadership development, annual conference	Jeffery Johnson, Ph.D., President and CEO, frequent national-level presenter; close working relationship with IV-D agencies (NCSEA).

Attachment

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER FIFTEEN

WHEREAS, Iowans have traditionally recognized that strong families are essential to ensuring that our children will enjoy a secure future; and

WHEREAS, Iowans intuitively understand that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents; and

WHEREAS, an emerging set of scientific data supports our belief that a healthy bond between a child and the child's parents has a direct impact on the future success of the child; and

WHEREAS, the absence of one parent from a child's life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavior problems associated with the child's development; and

WHEREAS, for most children, the absent parent is the father; and

WHEREAS, studies reveal that children with an absent parent are more likely to develop substance abuse problems, drop out of school, become teenage parents, and engage in criminal behavior than children who maintain healthy bonds with both parents; and

WHEREAS, children with two parents who actively and positively engage in their life by providing financial support, love, guidance, and discipline, have a greater chance for success than children who receive active involvement from only one parent.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor of the State of Iowa, by the power vested in me by the laws of the constitution of the State of Iowa do hereby order the creation of the **INTER-AGENCY WORK GROUP ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD**.

1. Purpose. The Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood is established to complete the following tasks:

1. Identify barriers within state policy and procedures that may act to impede the development of strong emotional and financial bonds of support between both parents and their children;
2. Identify opportunities that may exist among programs administered by departments to assist the absent parent in providing emotional and financial support for their children;
3. Propose adjustments to state policy and procedures to reduce barriers that discourage parents from developing a strong foundation of support for their children;

4. Identify promising practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
 - a. Identify services that have been successful in keeping young fathers actively involved in strong parenting role.
 - b. Identify successful approaches for ensuring that fathers obtain and maintain full employment, learn how to be active parents, and develop skills for coping with difficult relationships
5. Attempt to quantify the benefits that can be gained by increasing the level of active support that children receive from both parents;
6. Make recommendations for additional steps that the State of Iowa should take to remove the barriers that prevent children from receiving the emotional and financial support of both parents.

The work-group shall submit a written report to the governor outlining its finding, conclusions, and recommendations by December 31, 2000.

II. Organization. The director for the Iowa Department of Human Services will chair the Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood. The work group will consist of representatives from the following state agencies:

- A. Department of Public Health;
- B. Department of Workforce Development;
- C. Department of Education;
- D. Department of Corrections.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of Iowa to be affixed. Done in Des Moines, Iowa this ____ day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

ATTEST:

Chester J. Culver
Secretary of State

Access and Visitation

Name of the grant: Access and Visitation Grants to States

Length of grant: Each grant is an annual grant. Each state must reapply each year. The statute does not limit the number of years in the grant program. We are currently in year 4 of the grants.

Purpose of the Grant:

42 USC 469b states "The Administration for Children and Families shall make grants under this section to enable States to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate non-custodial parents' access to and visitation of their children by means of activities including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup) and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements."

Eligible recipients: 42 USC 669b states:

"Each State to which a grant is made under this section -
(1) may administer State programs funded with the grant, directly or through grants to or contracts with courts, local public agencies, or nonprofit private entities;
(2) shall not be required to operate such programs on a statewide basis. . . ."

Reporting Requirements:

The programs receiving grants will submit quarterly and summary reports.

Quarterly reports shall include the following:

- the number of participants served;
- the specific services provided (number of services and number of participants receiving them);
- the funds expended;
- progress towards meeting performance measures;
- narrative which addresses the progress towards meeting individual participant outcomes;
- narrative that addresses the progress toward meeting project outcomes.